

Purpose and Need
Cottonwood Creek Corral
Tonto Basin Ranger District

Date: 1/27/2021

ID Team Leader: Eric Hoskins/Crystal Martinez

Project Name: Roosevelt's Cottonwood Shipping Corral

Project type: Structural Range Improvement

Target start date: May 1st 2021

Target finish date: October 30th 2022

Expected NEPA Documentation Type: Categorical Exclusion (DM required)

If Categorical Exclusion, select Category: 32.2 (9) Implement or modify minor management practices for range allotment when no allotment mgmt plan

Project location: The Cottonwood Creek Corral is located on the Roosevelt allotment of the Tonto Basin Ranger District, Tonto National Forest. This project will serve as a location to hold, separate and load cattle for shipping to other pastures or sale.

The new corral and troughs would be located within the Substation Horse Pasture. The legal location is T4N, R12E, Sec. 28

Vegetation type: Sonoran Desert Scrub

Existing Condition

The Roosevelt livestock grazing allotment borders both Apache and Roosevelt Lake and is divided by Deer Hill which requires livestock to be frequently corralled and hauled between the Apache Lake side and the Roosevelt Lake side when rotating livestock between pastures. As such, strategic corrals have been located throughout the allotment to facilitate these moves and obtain proper livestock rest and rotation as required by the current management plan. The main shipping corrals are located in the Substation horse pasture just off of 188 on the Roosevelt Lake side. These corrals provide easy highway access, a large turn around site for trailers and is designed to be used every year for the removal or addition of livestock. The location of this main shipping corral within the Substation horse pasture however makes livestock management difficult due to it being located in the center of the pasture and surrounded by a power substation and heavily used recreational trailhead that provides access to the Arizona Trail so additional wing fences to help move cattle into the corral cannot be constructed. Additionally, the corral is directly south of the Tonto Basin Visitor Center and Frazier Horse Camp making the area very popular with visitors causing additional conflicts with recreational users and personnel working at the power substation preventing cattle from watering at the corral and movement of cattle into the corral by the livestock operator.

Desired Conditions

As described in the Tonto National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan the area of this project is in Management area 6F which emphasize water oriented developed and dispersed recreation and a higher

focus on the visual resources. Range management in this area is to be managed at a level C which includes minimal range improvements necessary for that management.

Range management in the Forest Plan at level C is described as follows:

“Management seeks full utilization of forage allocated to livestock. Cost effective management systems and techniques, including fencing and water development, are designed and applied to obtain relatively uniform livestock distribution and use of forage, and to maintain plant vigor.”

The Tonto National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan states that rangeland in less than satisfactory condition will be treated with improved grazing management along with the installation of structural and non-structural improvements (pg 195). Also to develop structural improvements in association with AMP's to maintain utilization at levels appropriate with management intensity and AMP objectives.

Current Management Direction

The Roosevelt Allotment located on the Tonto Basin Ranger District is permitted for 231 Cows/calves and 172 yearlings with an Allotment Management Plan signed in 1993. The basic goal of the management plan is to improve resource conditions on the Roosevelt Management Unit while maintaining a viable livestock operation. Some of the management objectives identified include:

- Accommodate riparian recovery on the Cottonwood and Pine Creeks.
- Improve management to increase the area of distribution of livestock from 60% to 80-90% of suitable acres on the allotments using the Forest Service Guidelines and Standards.
- Achieve proper use of rangeland vegetation on a greater percentage of allotment acreage to improve rangeland resource objectives.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to reduce conflicts with recreational users, facilitate recreational uses and to provide an alternate shipping corral site that accommodates the needs of the livestock management in the area. There is a need to have a useable shipping corral for the Roosevelt livestock operator and to facilitate the recreational needs and uses are the Frazier Trail head.

Proposed Action

This project consists of constructing a new shipping corral with highway road access and a small holding pasture within the Ty Horse pasture on the Roosevelt grazing allotment. This area will be signed and gated in order to prevent the public from blocking access to the corrals and will be located next to the Lakeside Estates property to reduce visual impacts of the site. Access will be off of Highway 188 and will be located along the old highway alignment. The existing corral will be left in place for equestrian recreational day use. A new pipeline will also be installed off of a near by water system where water will be gravity fed down to a new trough that would be placed in the corral.

Design Features

The corral will be approximately 120' by 100' with a loading Shute and clearing for turning around. Road access for trucks and trailers will be off of 188 along the old highway alignment. A new fence will be constructed to create a holding pasture encompassing approximately 40 acres. The fence will be a four

strand barbwire fence 42 inches tall with a bottom smooth wire. The wire spacing from the ground will be 16" 6" 8" 12" with T-posts between 16' or 20' apart with three stays between each T Posts. The trough installed will include a float and a functional wildlife escape ramp.

Implementation Timeline:

Initial Scoping should be completed by May 1st 2021 and implementation is expected to begin by September 1st 2021

Please send your questions, concerns, or mitigations to:

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